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SUBJECT : MILITARY NEWS: "To Improve Command Training", by  
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Readers Propose

To Improve Command Training

The state of command training for officers still does not fully meet modern requirements. The periodic refresher training and exercises carried out in the units do not resolve the problems of systematic improvement of tactical and military-technical knowledge of officers. 980

In the period between the refresher training and command exercises, the officers must increase their knowledge mainly by the method of private study. The majority of officers, however, study the service regulations, new combat equipment, and other military problems irregularly and unsystematically, without any check from their senior commanders.

On the basis of the experience of troops we consider it possible to suggest certain additions to the established procedure for command training of officers.

Among the troops of the Kiev Military District the command training of officers was done, to a certain extent, in a new way. Apart from refresher training and exercises, command training for the commanders of companies (batteries) and platoons is carried out on those days when their subunits are on detail (v naryade). The exercises are organized at battalion (batalon, divizion) level and are conducted by their commanders, deputies, and chiefs of services of the regiment. 426

It was possible to achieve this by putting garrison and guard duties in order. The guards of the units were amalgamated with the garrison ones, and the number of posts in them was reduced to a minimum. At present, in the majority of units the guard duties are normally taken over by a battalion (batalon, divizion). The detailing of company (battery) officers for guard and garrison duties has been sharply curtailed. As a result, several additional days per month are available for conducting command training with the commanders of platoons and companies in each battalion.

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Let us look at the example of the 1st Battalion, 354th Motorized Rifle Regiment. In April 1960, the battalion was on garrison guard duties three times--on the 8th, 13th, and 18th. During these days tactical, technical, and especially fire training were carried out with the commanders of the companies and platoons not engaged in guard duties. Those in charge of the exercises were the battalion commander and the chiefs of the services of the regiment. 908

In each training period, besides the courses and command training, two days of command refresher training or one command-staff exercise every month is conducted with the battalion (batalon, divizion) commanders, their deputies, and staff officers. The commanders of the units and the chiefs of arms of troops and services of the division direct the training.

The command officer personnel of the division and regiments also study systematically. Besides the staff training one day each month is allotted for command training.

Experience has shown that the organization of command training of officers that we adopted fully justifies itself.

No less important is the improvement of training officers' methods. After all, the level of combat training of personnel depends on how well organized and how skilfully the training is conducted by the officers of the subunits.

We paid particular attention to the preparation of officers, especially junior officers, for training. This preparation is thoroughly planned and is conducted in an organized manner without increasing the work day of the officers.

The company (battery) commander, usually on a Friday, presents his training schedule for the following week to the battalion (batalon, divizion) commander for his approval. In his report he precisely states by days and hours when and which platoon commanders are free from conducting training in the subunits. At the same time the chief of staff of the battalion enters these hours into the organizational chart for the regular training of officers. The names of the officers and the actual days and hours of their preparation for the training are shown in it, as well as the person in charge of training. The battalion commander, his deputy, or the



chief of staff is usually appointed to this position. Officers of the artillery subunits of a motorized rifle regiment are prepared for regular training under the direction of the artillery commanding officer.

In accordance with this chart the officers who are not themselves engaged in training assemble at the appointed time. If necessary, the person in charge checks the officers' knowledge of the service regulations and instructions relevant to the theme of the training, how they intend to organize and carry it out, and by which methods they will implement each training problem. Then the complement of the subunit taking part in it, the materiel support of the exercise, and the fitting out of the personnel are determined. The person in charge recommends to the officers which tactical situation it is most advisable to create and how to simulate the enemy. If necessary, he explains in what sequence the most difficult problems of the subject should be implemented and which of the training devices and visual aids are to be used. Sometimes a young officer will require assistance in drawing up a plan summary.

Thorough planning of combat and political preparation in all elements and the bringing in of senior commanders as well as master sergeants and sergeants to conduct training with the personnel gives the platoon commanders more time for more intensive preparation to conduct training in their subunits. Not more than 3 to 4 hours a day are now spent by them in the direct training of their subunits. The rest of the working day is utilized in preparing for the regular training and in improving their own knowledge.

At regimental level the officers prepare for the regular training under the direction of the regimental commander, his deputies, and chiefs of services. For each week a combined training schedule is compiled by the regiment which shows the position, rank, and surname of the officers, time and place of their preparation for the scheduled training, as well as the position, rank, and surname of the person in charge of the preparation. The procedure and sequence for conducting training with this group of officers is approximately the same as with the platoon commanders. In case of need, a move to a particular locality is organized.

Such a system of preparation for regular training increases the responsibility of senior commanding officers to organize the instruction and the education of their subordinate officers. It gives the officers an opportunity to prepare for conducting the training in a purposeful and correct systematic manner.

by Colonel A. Zhiltsov  
Lieutenant-Colonel I. Sevryukov

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In cadre (skadrovanny) units the maximum time possible should be allotted for command training of officers. It is advisable to fix the duration of the training year at eight months. One month each before the beginning of the winter and summer training periods will be utilized for the preparation of the training-material base and the converting of equipment and armament for winter and summer use. Two months will be taken up by the preparation and conducting of refresher training for the attached personnel and students.

It is advisable to allot three days a week for command training of the company (battery) commanders and their deputies. It is essential to have one day a week for special training of officers in the artillery, mortar, and tank subunits of motorized rifle regiments. It is desirable that this day be the last day of command training. The special training of officers of arms of troops and services of the regiments is best carried out by means of a two-day training period once a month.

The remainder of the time will be used for private study, preparation for regular training, for party political measures, theoretical conferences, giving of lectures, etc. Time will also be required for instructing reserve officers, assisting DOSAAF organizations and secondary schools in military training for civilians. It is also necessary to maintain the combat equipment and carry out guard and internal services.

When forming the groups for command training, one must take into account the position held by the officer, his work experience, individual training, and the officer's general development. This forming of groups facilitates the planning of training and makes it possible to provide all groups with experienced and well-trained leaders.

The unit commanders must be the real organizers of the command training. Exercises on tactical training should be conducted by the group leaders themselves. The best trained staff officers or their authorized deputies will be employed as assistants. For other training subjects the leaders can be staff officers and chiefs of arms of troops and services.

In the subject matter of tactical training for unit and subunit commanders and for officers of the operations and intelligence sections (otdeleniye), it is desirable to have several subjects at a higher level than the positions they have. For the remaining officers part of the subjects should be selected at a level lower than the categories of the headquarters or the service. The organization of units and large units of the Soviet Army must be studied together with other problems.

Tactical training must take not less than 20 to 25 percent of the training time. Up to 15 to 20 percent must be allotted for technical training. It is essential to give the greatest attention to the study of missile equipment, weapons of mass destruction, and armament of the unit and reinforcing subunits.

When studying new types of weapons and combat equipment, it is useful to visit special units where this equipment and armament can be seen. It is advisable to make greater use of military training films.

The training must be varied in its forms and methods of implementation. The key position should be taken by the group exercises, solving of short tactical exercises (takticheskaya letuchka), and war games in the field. Classroom instruction plays only a secondary role. The basic forms for their implementation are the theoretical conferences and discussions, seminars and practical instruction in special preparation, and the study of equipment and armament.

We consider that the time has come to work out the program for command training of officers in regular units and subunits. The main stress in this program should be laid on the Marxist-Leninist, tactical, technical, fire, and methodology training.

It is useful to increase the responsibility of officers for the command training. One of the possible ways may be the taking of tests at the end of the training year. A competent commission must be created for this. The results of its work will be taken into account when giving efficiency ratings and promoting officers to a higher position.

by Lieutenant-Colonel V. Paramonov

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In our regular regiment, four groups have been created for command training. Each of these groups was formed strictly according to official position (dolzhnostnoy priznak), taking into account the work experience and military education of the officers.

The regimental commander's group consists of the battalion commanders, their deputies and chiefs of staff of the battalions, the chief of the chemical service, the regimental engineer, and senior medical officer of the regiment. There is a total of fifteen officers in it.

The regimental deputy commander's group is composed of the commanding officers of companies, batteries, and their deputies. There are twenty-five officers in it.

The group of the chief of staff of the regiment has the officers of the regimental staff in it. This group also contains officers of battalion staff for staff training.

Artillery officers are instructed in the regimental artillery commander's group (only during the hours of special training). Tank officers are brought into this group for fire training from concealed positions.

At certain exercises in the regimental commander's group (war games, command-staff exercises), officers of the deputy regimental commander's group attend, playing the part of the enemy.

The subject matter of the training for all groups is worked out by the district headquarters. Experience has, however, shown that it is impossible at the district level to provide the subjects and method of training for all regular units and subunits. It is essential to allow their commanders more initiative because the commanders of the regular units and subunits and their headquarters have more knowledge about the conditions where this or that exercise is organized, the degree of officer preparation, and the state of the training base.

The majority of the training should be conducted in the field. A passion for lectures, group exercises, and war games in the classroom only brings harm to the field training of the officers.

Taking into account the shortcomings that existed last year, we organized officer training somewhat differently.

First of all, the plan was worked out for the whole winter training period. Five or six days before the beginning of the next month a more specific training schedule is compiled. These are planned for three successive days. One day per week is allotted for maintenance of equipment, one day for mobilization work, and one day for study of military publications. With such planning the officers know exactly what they will be doing during the following week.

The conducting of training during three successive training days in a week permits a considerably deeper study of the training problems. The attendance at the training is also increased.

In the experience of past years the plans for the command training, worked out in the regiment and confirmed by the senior commanders, were very frequently changed and amended by them to such an extent that they were actually completely destroyed. This affects training very unfavorably and should not be permitted.

Last year we brought in the battalion commanders and their chiefs of staff to conduct training with officers. This makes it possible for a large number of officers to gain experience in training methods, in the working out of short exercises, group exercises, etc. The practical training was conducted mainly in the field with means of radio communication. The field training of the officers improved considerably.

Night field training with officers, without the requisite lighting and marking, does not produce anything, and to organize this in a regular regiment is almost impossible because there are no enlisted men or NCO's, and the necessary means of communication are not available. There are not even sufficient means of transport available. Taking this into account, it seems to us that tactical night training of officers in each regiment should be organized, taking into account the capabilities of the regiment.

Individual socialist competition has developed among our officers. The totaling of the results of the training for the month and checking the fulfilment of the socialist obligations improve those who are lagging. The results of the officer training were found to be higher than in previous years.

In order that the officers of the cadre units and subunits do not lose their skills in training and educating personnel they should be sent to line units after two to three years. It is also useful to detail them as umpires at exercises, to commissions checking combat and political training in line units, and to various systematic refresher courses. Acting in this way, even with the reduced strength of the army one can still retain the required number of well-trained officer cadres.

by Guards Colonel V. Chudin

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